

Region 2 Fact Sheet

Geographic summary

States: New Jersey, New York

Territories: Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands

Tribes: St. Regis Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Tuscarora, Tonawanda Seneca, Seneca Nation of Indians [these seven are known as the Haudenosaunee], and Shinnecock

Logistics

Regional Office headquarters: 290 Broadway, New York City

Field offices: Edison, NJ; Guaynabo, PR; Vieques, PR; St. Thomas, USVI; Buffalo & Albany, NY; Stamford, CT (shared with Region 1)

Laboratory: Edison, NJ

Staff: Approximately 750 FTE

Top environmental priorities and challenges

- Recovery from 2017 Hurricanes in the USVI and PR; and from 2020 earthquakes in PR. Millions in federal aid are managed by Region 2. Major problems include non-compliant landfills (coupled with lack of recycling), that are running out of capacity in both PR and USVI; and 240 non-compliant small drinking water systems in PR (not operated by the central PR water utility) serving 3% of the population. Both PR & USVI face severe fiscal crises; lack of capacity to manage grants; insufficient staffing; and, in PR, government instability.
- Unsatisfactory air quality, particularly in the NYC and Philadelphia Metropolitan areas; major concerns are ozone and diesel-related fine particulates; localized concerns over SO₂ and lead occur in PR and elsewhere.
- R2 Superfund sites (2nd highest number among 10 EPA regions; NJ has most of any state) include many of the nation's largest, and many that are high profile and controversial, including sediment sites such as Hudson, Passaic and Grasse Rivers, Gowanus Canal and Newtown Creek, and terrestrial sites such as American Cyanamid and Wellsbach, with cleanup costs ranging from \$250 M to more than \$2 B.
- Concerns about lead exposure, particularly for children. Major sources are drinking water due to older lead service lines that convey water from the mains in the street into homes (robust testing and lead service line replacement programs are essential); and deteriorating lead paint in older homes.
- Combined sewer overflows (CSOs) in older cities, which discharge mixture of raw sewage and rainwater during rain events. Minimizing CSO discharges is costly, but is critical to achieve water quality goals.
- Assuring continued protection of the unfiltered Catskill and Delaware watersheds from which NYC (the largest water supply system in the US) draws 90% of its drinking water supply, and balancing that objective with ensuring fairness for the residents and municipalities within the watershed.
- RCRA Corrective Action sites – some 700 sites, many similar to Superfund sites, needing remediation.
- Surface water quality concerns: pathogens, toxics (e.g., mercury) and nutrients (nitrogen & phosphorus which result in harmful algal blooms, impacting coastal waters, fresh waters and drinking water).
- Uncovered finished drinking water reservoirs; the largest is Hillview in NYC (25 years and \$2 B to cover).
- Emerging Contaminants, notably PFAS, 1-4 dioxane and ethylene oxide. R2 is working with states, Indian nations, local gov'ts. & communities to understand impacts on drinking water, surface water, air and soil.
- Geographic priorities include Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, Lake Champlain, and six national estuaries in Region 2: Long Island Sound, NY/NJ Harbor, Peconic Bay, Barnegat Bay, Delaware River, and San Juan Bay.
- Collaboration with & compliance assistance to Indian Nations and small and disadvantaged/EJ communities.
- R2 coordinates closely with FEMA and other partners to support the federal homeland security mission.